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THE BAPTIST RECORD

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Missionary families pray for hostage dads

By Stacey Hamby
Missouri Word & Way

CAMDENTON, Mo. (BP) — "Very soon. We will arrange it." Those were the last words Patti Tenenoff heard the intruder speak the night a group of armed men stormed her house and kidnapped her husband, Rick. That was five years ago.

Today, Patti and two other wives still await the return of their husbands.

New Tribes Mission missionaries Rick Tenenoff, Dave Mankins, and Mark Rich were kidnapped Jan. 31, 1993, from their homes in a Kuna village in southern Panama, 12 miles from the Colombian border.

Their wives believe a guerrilla group in Colombia continues to hold the three men hostage.

"I have never asked God why this has happened," Patti Tenenoff said. "I have asked him, 'Why so long?'"

She and her children — Dora, 13, Connie, 8, and Lee, 6 — live on the New Tribes Mission campus near Camdenton, Mo., and attend Concord Baptist Church in Jefferson City.

"How she copes is nothing short of the divine work of the Holy Spirit," said Annie Merchen, whose husband, Lee, was stationed at the U.S. military base in Panama City, when they met the Tenenoffs.

"I can see it in her relationship with her children; she's very quiet, very gentle. She's a beautiful example of someone walking very close with the Lord," she said.

Patti said some words shared

with her a few years ago have helped her deal with being separated from her husband.

"This friend said, 'God picked three special men to be missionaries to this guerrilla group.'

"I didn't see it as a privilege, but then, through time, I realized you're not going to get people to volunteer to go to a guerrilla group, but I think after five years, I'm at a crossroads with God.

"I don't doubt his sovereign plans for us, but after five years, I sometimes (ask God), 'Do you really know what you're doing?'"

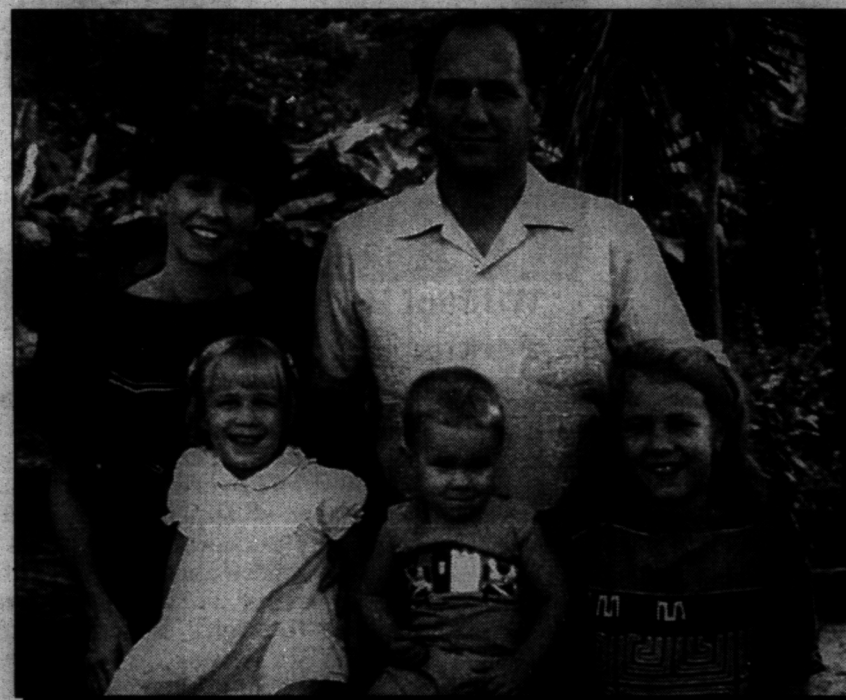
"I need prayer. It's harder now. There's no closure. I need to know how he's doing," she said.

A crisis team for New Tribes Mission, a nondenominational missionary-sending organization based in Sanford, Fla., has been working since the kidnapping to resolve the situation with the guerrilla group, known as FARC (acronym for Spanish name of Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia).

"Over the years, we've had the opportunity to talk to Indians who come out of the jungle who say they've seen the men, and guerrillas who have been captured by the Colombian military have said they are still alive," said Scott Ross, New Tribes attorney and crisis team member.

Jan. 31, 1993, was a normal Sunday afternoon in the Kuna village of Pucuro. At about 7 p.m. on the already-dark evening, Rick was in his hammock talking to a Kuna man.

"Rick yelled in Spanish, 'My wife is in back of the house.' I could see out the hallway and



FIVE YEARS AGO — New Tribes missions missionary Rick Tenenoff poses for a family photo shortly before he and two other missionaries were kidnapped by South American guerrillas bent on a multi-million-dollar ransom. Family members include (from left) wife Patti, daughter Connie, son Lee, and daughter Dora. (Photo courtesy of Missouri Word and Way)

see Rick was on the floor, face down, and a guerrilla was tying his hands behind his back; I could see the guerrilla's gun over his shoulder.

As soon as the guerrillas left, the Tenenoff house filled with Kuna men. The men from the village left.

Then, two guerrillas came back and started yelling at her in Spanish.

As the older of the two guerrillas was leaving, Patti followed him to the door and asked when she would see her husband again. "He said, 'Very

soon. We will arrange it,' and I believed him."

The two youngest children don't remember their father because they were so young at the time of the kidnapping.

"At bedtime, they ask me to tell them stories about Daddy. Each child has a picture of himself or herself with Daddy. Connie has kissed hers good night.

"We know God is sovereign, but he wouldn't have us sit around, either," she said.

"Please pray. We don't want our husbands to be forgotten."

Looking back

10 years ago

Contributions to the 1987 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions has reached less than 80% of the \$75 million goal by late March. Foreign Mission Board President Keith Parks expresses "deep concern" about the pace of receipts. "This creates some serious implications for our budget," he said.

20 years ago

Jackson Mayor Dale Danks proclaims April 23 as Bible Day in the capitol city in conjunction with the Bible Festival at First Church, Jackson. The Bible Festival was incorporated as part of the Mississippi Arts Festival to celebrate the world of the Bible, according to David Roddy, First Church minister of education.

50 years ago

The March 25 issue of The Baptist Record states that First Church, Greenwood, is installing air conditioning and "it is believed that this is the first church in Mississippi to have this feature." Information was later received that Main Street Church, Hattiesburg, was air conditioned in 1947.

BWA requests refugee aid

WASHINGTON (BP) — The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) has appealed to the United Nations to help solve a political crisis between the military government of Burma and Karen refugees. More than 100,000 Baptist refugees live under constant attack on the Thai/Burma border, according to the BWA.

The BWA's most recent appeal on behalf of the Karen refugees came after the news that 1,000 huts in the Hsiao Kalok refugee camp were burned by the Democratic Buddhist Karen Army, supported by the Burma military government.

According to reports received at the BWA, the attackers used automatic rifles and grenades, among other weapons, to burn down the camp. Twenty people were wounded, an unknown number kidnapped, and some of the reports say two people were killed. Thai government troops assigned to guard the camps offered no resistance, according to the reports.

"It is a tragedy in a civilized society that the government of Myanmar (Burma) continues to abuse its refugees," said Denton Lotz, BWA general secretary.

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

APRIL 9, 1998

VOL. 122

NO. 10



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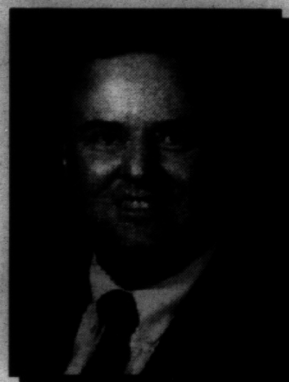
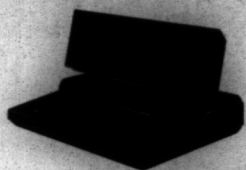
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Postmaster: Send changes of address
to The BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box
530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Send
news, communication, and address
changes to The Editor, BAPTIST
RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS
39205-0530 (601) 968-3800

VOLUME 122 NUMBER 10

(ISSN-0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4
and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist
Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street,
Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$8.35 per
year payable in advance. Economy plans
available for cooperating Mississippi
churches. Periodicals postage paid at
Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State
Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items —
one calendar week prior to requested pub-
lication date. Advertising — two calendar
weeks prior to requested publication date.

If only they knew what we know

He is risen! For every Christian, those three words describing Easter are proof that Jesus Christ is everything the Bible says he is — and everything he said he is during his earthly ministry 2,000 years ago.

With each coming of Spring, Christians around the world gather to celebrate one of the cornerstones of our faith.

The many churches of the Christian faith mark the resurrection in many different ways, but we all mark the resurrection as the fulfillment of God's promise to send a Messiah to his people.

There would be no Christian faith, but for the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12-19).

Our many ministries would be a waste of time. Our passion for evangelizing the world would be futile. Our hope for the future would be worthless.

It's one of the non-negotiable tenets by which we can discern whether an individual or group is truly a follower of Christ.

If they have problems with the resurrection, they have problems with Christianity. It's that simple.

How odd all of that must sound to the secular world, raised to believe Easter consists of rabbits and candy eggs and baby chicks.

If Christmas consists of nothing more than a morbidly overweight Caucasian male with a stable of supersonic reindeer delivering goodies to children and adults alike, what's not to believe about the Easter Bunny?

It seems we will go to any length to cloud the deity of Christ at these special times of the year.

News media have been quick to accept postulations from pseudo-experts who trace Easter to fertility festivals dating to the Dark Ages (hence the obsession with eggs).

Magazines such as "Time," "Newsweek," and "U.S. News & World Report" in recent years have devoted large portions of their Easter-week issues to junk science essays on whether Jesus was truly the Son of God and the physiological impossibility of raising someone from the dead — this from people some of whom believe without an ounce of doubt that a dead body can be revived if it is quick-frozen until the right technology becomes available.

If only they knew what we know, surely they would put their faith in the proper place.

If only they knew what we know, surely they would cast aside their pretentious pronouncements on fertility festivals and a future filled with freeze-dried humans.

If only they knew... but isn't that when we come in?

How are they going to know what we know, unless we tell them?

If the reality of Easter means anything to Christians, it should move us to renew our pledge to help bring the world — and in our particular case, Mississippi — to Jesus.

At times, winning Mississippi and the



world to Jesus seems a daunting task, but it pales in comparison to what Jesus did for us on Good Friday.

In the name of love, he carried our burden of sin to Calvary. The weight of the world was upon his shoulders, and he did not fail us.

In the name of love, will we now carry his burden for a lost and dying world?

The choice is ours. Our Lord is waiting. What will be your answer?

GUEST OPINION:



*Are Mormons like us?
Don't you believe it!*

By John L. Smith, founder
Utah Missions, Inc.

George Barna, a renowned researcher of religious trends in America, has reported some startling trends.

He declared that one-fourth of all Mormons surveyed report that they have been "born again." If his survey is factual, it can be readily explained.

Currently more than four times as many proselytes (people from other churches) are joining the Mormon Church than those who are born to Mormon people, who are all considered Mormon at birth.

I have seen it estimated that 40%-60% of those being proselyted have some connection with Baptist churches. I would not doubt either percentage.

Baptists are the most gullible people in the world. If asked what we believe about God, for instance, we will hazard a guess. Baptist people are usually happy to express their sentiments.

That's all a Mormon missionary could hope for.

Consequently, through good salesmanship, many Baptist people are becoming Mormon, but I've never met a recent convert who had the slightest idea what Mormonism really teaches.

The Barna report could easily be misinterpreted. He says 26% of Mormons claim a "born-again" experience. That can be explained, since Mormonism teaches that one is born again

when he is baptized as soon as possible after his eighth birthday.

Mormon Apostle Bruce McConkie (in his Mormon Doctrine, p. 101) says "The second birth begins when men are baptized in water by a legal administrator..."

The article continues, "no one can be born again without baptism..." Thus, as far as the average Mormon is concerned, he has been baptized so he is "born again."

The Barna report also states that Mormons are more likely to embrace a biblical perspective on a number of scriptural factors than several well-known church groups.

"These include beliefs that the Bible is totally accurate in all that it teaches and holding an orthodox, biblical view of God," Barna states.

However, McConkie (pp. 82-83) questions the Bible, declar-

ing "that they (Biblical writings) have not come down to us in their perfect form is well known in the (LDS) church and by all reputable scholars."

He further declares that "many plain and precious things were deleted, in consequence of which error and falsehood poured into the various churches (1 Nephi 13)."

I recently did what I tell people never to do — I let the Mormon missionaries in.

I rather quickly asked what we should talk about. They agreed that the doctrine of God was no doubt the most important subject that we could discuss.

I asked if they could become gods? Hopefully, they both nodded, they someday could. They did believe the couplet that almost every Mormon knows: "As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become."

Then I asked, "Is either of those positions taught in the Book of Mormon? If not, then either the Book of Mormon is wrong or Mormonism is wrong!"

I hastened to call attention to the fact that the title page of the Book of Mormon, the Testimony of the Three Witnesses, Mosiah 15:1-5; Alma 11:22-29, 44; Mormon 9:9-11; Moroni 8:18 and a dozen and more other places taught my concept of God rather than what Mormonism teaches.

I quickly turned to Alma 34:34-36. The 36th verse says, "the Lord dwelleth not in unholy temples, but in the hearts of the righteous doth he dwell ..."

I quickly turned to the Doctrine & Covenants 130:3 (equally scripture to Mormons) and read, "The idea that the Father and the Son dwell in a man's heart is an old sectarian notion, and is false."

They had to be on their way! I suggested they return with their bishop, mission president, or just perhaps with their prophet. I haven't seen them since.

Smith was a Southern Baptist pastor and preacher in Utah for 17 years. He is the author of 10 books on Mormonism.

He may be contacted at Utah Missions, Inc., P.O. Box 348, Marlow, OK 73055-0348. Telephone: (800) 654-3992.

Divinity school taps Mississippian for visitor board

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (ABP and local reports) — Jackson attorney Rebecca Wiggs is among 14 people Wake Forest University has appointed to serve on the first board of visitors for its divinity school, which is scheduled to open next year.



Wiggs

Wiggs is a member of Northminster Church, Jackson, and also serves on the board of directors

of news service Associated Baptist Press based in Jacksonville, Fla.

"We are glad to have people of (Wiggs') caliber on the board providing key leadership as we build toward the fall 1999 opening of a divinity school that will be Christian by tradition, ecumenical in outlook, and Baptist in heritage," said Bill Leonard, the school's dean.

Each member will serve a four-year term on the new board.

Leonard said the school will train students from a variety of denominational backgrounds using a curriculum that blends instruction in traditional semi-

nary subjects with courses taught by the faculty from the university's undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools.

The school will offer the master-of-divinity degree.

Earlier this year, the Henry R. Luce Foundation of New York awarded the school \$150,000 for developing the multidisciplinary courses required to prepare graduates for America's changing congregations.

Leonard said he expects the school to open with five faculty and 35 students, building to 135 to 150 students within three years.

The school's first faculty members will be announced

later this spring.

To date, Wake Forest has raised more than \$10 million in contributions or pledges toward a \$15 million goal, and completed the first phase of renovations in Wingate Hall — the site of the new school upon completion of renovations.

That work is scheduled to be completed this summer.

THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

THE BAPTIST
Record

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

APRIL 9, 1998

VOL. 122

No. 10

Mississippians to receive SBREA award

Mississippi natives J. Roger Skelton and Henry E. Love will receive the Distinguished Leadership Award from the Southern Baptist Religious Educators Association (SBREA) when the group meets April 17 in Atlanta.

Skelton, who was born at Geeville in Prentiss County and reared in Tippah and Webster Counties, retired in 1983 after 16 years as professor of religious education at Golden Gate Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

Before joining the faculty at Golden Gate Seminary, Skelton served as minister of education at First Church of Van Nuys, Calif., Cedar Crest Church in Dallas, and First Church, Jonesboro, Ark.

He also served on the staff of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, five years in the Sunday School department, and three years in the church training department.

He is the author of numerous articles and curriculum units for Southern Baptist periodicals, and he wrote the teacher's guide for the Seminary Extension course, "The Pastor as a Person."

Skelton was SBREA president in 1980-81 and also was elected to a pair of vice-president terms.

He holds the bachelor of arts degree from Mississippi College in Clinton, and both master of religious education and doctor of education degrees from Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth.

Skelton and his wife of 56 years, Bessie (a Rankin County native), have two adult children and now make their home in Nashville.

Henry E. Love has served since 1981 as executive director of the national Baptist Medical-Dental Fellowship in Memphis. Earlier in his four-decade education min-

Mississippi in Hattiesburg and Mississippi College in Clinton, where he majored in Bible and social studies. He served as SBREA president from 1965-66, and was also president of a number of local and regional religious education organizations.

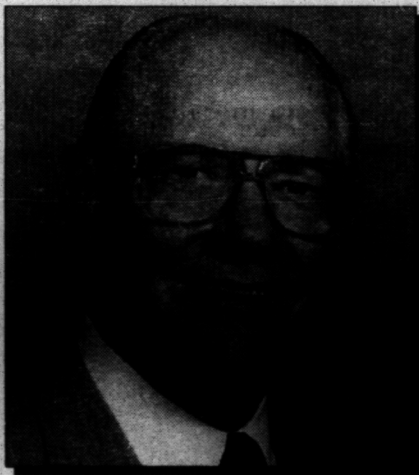
A regular instructor at Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina and Glorieta Conference Center in New Mexico, Love and his wife of 58 years, Ora Lee, have two adult children and now make their home in Memphis.

Ora Lee Love, a native of Alabama, attended Mississippi Woman's College — now William Carey College — in Hattiesburg, where she served as student body president.

Bill Cromer is the third and final recipient of this year's award. He was a faculty member at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., for four decades, retiring in 1997 as senior professor of Christian education.

In addition to his teaching duties, Cromer served for 17 years as business manager of the faculty journal, "Review and Expositor."

According to "Journal," an SBREA publication, criteria for nomination for the Distinguished Leader Award include a record of participation in religious education associations; SBREA membership and participation; and substantial service in Christian educational ministries



Skelton



Love

istry, he served on the staff of First Church, Jackson, under the pastorate of W.A. Hewitt.

Love is a Hattiesburg native. He attended the University of Southern

Miss. CP totals \$1.9M in March

Mississippi Baptists gave \$1.9 million in March through their Cooperative Program (CP), according to Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, which disburses the funds.

March gifts, totaling \$1,918,624, were higher than March 1997 gifts by \$154,066.

Miss. CP gifts for 1998 total \$6,321,837. This amount is \$287,541, or 4.35%, lower than gifts for the same period in 1997.

According to the statistical figure known as the pro rata budget, gifts are only behind by \$64,815, or 1.01%. The pro rata budget is the amount figured by taking the total 1998 Miss. CP budget of \$25,546,608, dividing by 12 months of the year, and multiplying by the number of months elapsed.

In Miss. CP gifts will help fund:

- the upcoming State Bible Drills in a number of cities,
- the church facilities workshop on April 14 in Natchez,
- Mississippi Baptists in Broadcasting workshop on April 17-18 in Jackson.

SBC CP shows March increase

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Cooperative Program (CP) receipts for March increased nearly 10% compared to the previous year's March, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee.

For the month of March 1998, a total of \$12,731,017 was received, compared to the same month of 1997 of \$11,599,359, an increase of \$1,131,658 or 9.76%.

Designated gifts for March also surpassed that month a year ago: \$17,986,917 compared to \$17,263,757, an increase of \$723,160 or 4.19%.

For the fiscal year, \$95,286,159 in designated gifts have been received compared to \$87,897,962 a year ago, an increase of \$7,388,197 or 8.41%.

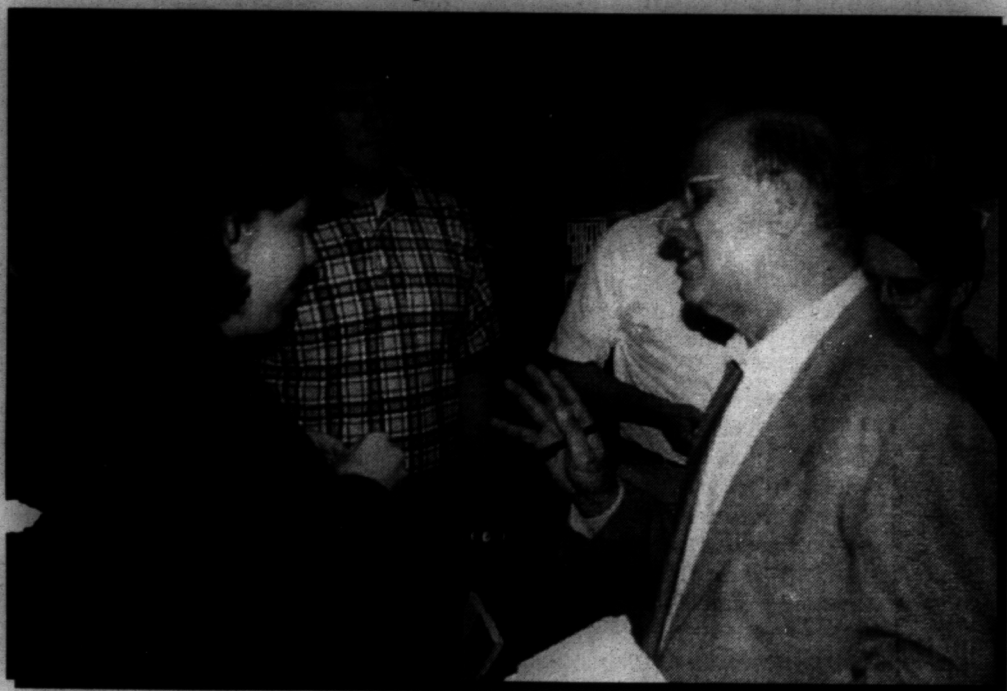
For the SBC CP Allocation Budget, the March CP receipts surpassed the budget requirement by more than 3%. For the halfway point in the fiscal year, the budget requirement of \$74,092,538 has been surpassed by \$5,245,445 or 7.08%.



Campolo issues challenge to MC students

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

Anthony Campolo, author, speaker, and professor of sociology at Eastern Baptist College in Philadelphia, Penn., challenged the student body of Mississippi College (MC) on April 1 to minister and reach out to the poor.



CAMPOLO SPEAKS — Tony Campolo (right) talks with Christy Connerly (left), a Mississippi college (MC) senior elementary education major from Grenada, and other students after speaking at the Baptist Student Union sponsored campus revival on the MC campus in Clinton. Campolo, a popular author and speaker, is professor of sociology at Eastern Baptist College, Philadelphia, Penn. (Photo by Carl M. White)

Campolo was on MC's Clinton campus on the evening of April 1 for a Baptist Student Union-sponsored campus revival and on the morning of April 2 for regular chapel services in Swor Auditorium on the campus.

"Everybody needs a mission, to choose a commitment. 'Self' is not out there waiting to be discovered from introspection. Selfhood is waiting to be created, and there is only one way to create self or identity: by what you are committed to," Campolo said.

He told of being raised in an Italian household, and being repeatedly told by his mother to serve Jesus by serving the poor.

"People used to ask me how I was called to the ministry. I would answer, 'My mother called me to the ministry,'" Campolo said.

"Why not a mother? Everyone else is trying to tell you how to live your life. What's wrong with a parent who says, 'As for me

and my house, we will serve the Lord.'"

Campolo told of research he conducted on the differences between how Japanese and American mothers raise their children.

"I asked both groups the same question, 'What do you want your kids to be when they grow up?'"

"The Japanese mothers, almost every one of them, said, 'I want my child to be successful.' The American mothers said, 'I want my child to be happy.'"

"My father used to tell me he wanted me to grow up and be good. Good, successful, happy? What about being committed?"

"There is one part of the Declaration of Independence that every American knows by heart. That is, the 'pursuit of happiness' is our inalienable right.

"Christianity is not about making you happy or successful. Jesus said if you follow me, you'll have to take up a cross."

Instead of the pursuit of self interest, Campolo challenged the students to seek ways to serve, especially to serve the poor.

"There are over 900 verses in the Bible that call people to respond to the needs of the poor," he said.

He told of once talking to a poor man whose beard contained food crumbs and who smelled awful.

"I asked the man what I could do for him. I expected him to say 'Give me five dollars,'" Campolo recounted.

Instead, the man asked for a hug.

"I wished he had asked for the five dollars! I hugged him, and he wouldn't let go. Then I realized, this was no bum I was holding in my arms.

"I heard a voice in the eternal now saying, 'I was hungry and you fed me. I was naked and you clothed me. I was a bum and you met me on the street.

If you failed to do it for the bum on the street, you failed to do it unto me,'" Campolo pointed out.

"You Baptists think you have judgement day all figured out," Campolo said, suggesting Southern Baptists are counting on their doctrinal purity and correctness.

"When you get to heaven, they're not going to ask you, 'OK, now, what about the virgin birth? Do you strongly agree, some-

what agree, disagree?' No! That's not the questions we'll be asked.

"The Bible has already given us the questions in Matthew 25. Instead of 'Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus?' Jesus changed the game.

"If you do not have a personal relationship with the poor and oppressed, you cannot have a personal relationship with Jesus," Campolo said.

"Your momma sent you to college to get a good education, right?" Campolo asked.

"That is so you can get a good — what?"

The audience answered, "Job."

Campolo continued, "So you can earn lots of —?"

"Money," the students responded.

"So you can buy lots of stuff," Campolo said.

"Is that what Christian education is all about? Christian education is equipping young people to serve others in the name of Jesus. Most Christian colleges train and equip you to climb the ladder of success," he said.

Campolo related the story of a pre-med student named Charlie who went with him on a mission trip to Haiti.

Charlie was so turned on by helping the poor he promised that after medical school he was going to come back and "make a difference."

Several years later, Campolo met Charlie in an airport. "He had made it. He was a doctor. He told me about going to church and how much he loved Jesus.

"Do you know what he was doing? He was doing cosmetic surgery, the kind that makes no difference.

"I said, 'Stop it Charlie. Look at you. You had a dream, but you sold out. You have traded your dream for a Jacuzzi and a porsche.'"

"The church is full of people who have sold out, who say they are followers of Jesus but are only believers in Jesus," Campolo said.

Campolo challenged the students. "Are your dreams and visions worthy of Christ? Are you going for titles, or for testimonies?"

"Try and get both," he said, "but if you have to choose, forget the title and go for the testimony."

Campolo: Beware of 'nit-picking'

After speaking April 1 at the Baptist Student Union-sponsored campus revival on the Mississippi College campus in Clinton, author/preacher/sociologist Tony Campolo talked with The Baptist Record associate editor Carl M. White. Among Campolo's comments:

BR - As you travel around the country speaking on college campuses, what are you observing?

Campolo - I see kids who want to be Christians but don't know how. Kids are in love with the American way of life. They are frightened of what would happen if they really loved Jesus, I mean really loved Jesus.

BR - We have just experienced a second year of record Mississippi student volunteers for summer missions. Are you seeing a movement among college students to serve?

Campolo - I am seeing a movement among young people today, but there is a danger here. Southern Baptists are the worst at this. We want to "program" it. We want to make it a thing to do.

BR - Is there anything else you would like to say to 100,000 Mississippi Baptists?

Campolo - I want Mississippi Baptists, and Baptists everywhere, north and south, to understand that you cannot fulfill the Great Commission until you fulfill the Great Commandment.

I'm worried about Baptists in Mississippi, and Baptists everywhere.

They seemed to be burdened down with theological nit-picking and in the process are losing their sensitivity to people who are hurting.

I'm worried about Baptists in Mississippi, and Baptists north and south, reducing the Gospel to the Republican Party platform — that they are confusing political goals with the radical claims of Christ.

Liberal Christians of the '60s equated Christianity with the Democratic party, and they paid a heavy price for it.

Why do we think it won't happen to us? Because our politics are better?

We have to realize that (the call of Christ) is to meet the needs of those around us who hurt, not just on the outside (of the church), but also on the inside.

Burroughs set to address wives at SBC meet in Salt Lake City

Author/speaker Esther Burroughs will keynote the 1998 Southern Baptist Minister's Wives Conference and Luncheon at 12 noon on June 9 during the 1998 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Salt Lake City.

The theme of the conference and luncheon is "A Woman's Journey — Embracing the Past, Engaging the Future."

Burroughs, through her "Esther Burroughs Ministries: Treasures of the Heart" organization, travels throughout the U.S. and Canada speaking to women about family, love, and marriage, missions, ministry, lifestyle witnessing, and servanthood.

A native of Calgary, Alberta,



Burroughs

Canada, she served the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board) as national women's evangelism consultant and as assistant director of the Special Mission Ministries Department.

Earlier, she was director of campus ministries at Samford University in Birmingham.

Her books include:

— "A Garden Path to Mentoring: Planting Your Life in Another"

— "Releasing the Fragrance of Christ"

— "Empowered."

Tickets to the conference and luncheon is \$12 per person if ordered before May 19, and \$14 per person at the annual meeting. Make checks payable to Southern Baptist Ministers Wives Conference and mail to Jane Sanders, 1301 Colorado Drive, Benbrook, TX 76126.

A self-addressed, stamped envelope is required for ticket return.

Analysis: Communism down, but not out

By Erich Bridges
International Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — *The fool hath said in his heart, "There is no God."* (Ps. 14:1) History has never lacked for fools, especially in modern times.

One of them, Karl Marx, pronounced religion the "opium of the people" — a drug administered by capitalist oppressors to dull the masses to the reality of their slavery.

That assertion became a tenet of Marx's "gift" to the world, communism.

Since the Russian Revolution of 1917, communism, in turn, has been employed as a secular religion by a parade of tyrants to enslave whole peoples with far more brutal efficiency than kings or capitalists ever dreamed of.

If you thought communism fell with the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union, take note: It still rules up to 1.5 billion people on three continents.

One unbroken survivor of the long Soviet terror is writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

By towering force of will and determination to bear witness, he endured years in Soviet slave camps until his release. Under constant threat of discovery and reimprisonment, he secretly chronicled his experience and the fate of countless others.

The result: "The Gulag Archipelago" — nearly 2,000 soul-shattering pages recording what those who declare "there is no God" can do to other human beings.

Solzhenitsyn is a modern Dante who "forbids blindness," according to Bernard-Henri Levy, one of the many former Marxists in the West finally shaken awake by the writer's words.

"We needed a 'Divine Comedy' to represent hell, the modern hell of the gulag," Levy said.

Of its many targets, communism always has been "most ruthless of all in its treatment of Christians," Solzhenitsyn wrote in 1980. "In the early years this meant whole-

sale executions; later the victims were left to rot in camps. But to this very day the persecution continues inexorably."

Communism is the deadliest modern ideology to attempt to evict God from human affairs. It is far from the only one.

Nazism. Fascism. Darwinism. Freudianism. Behaviorism. Existentialism. Materialism. Secular humanism.

God is missing from these philosophies; man is variously the godlike center of all things, a simmering collection of physical responses, or an absurd accident in a random universe.

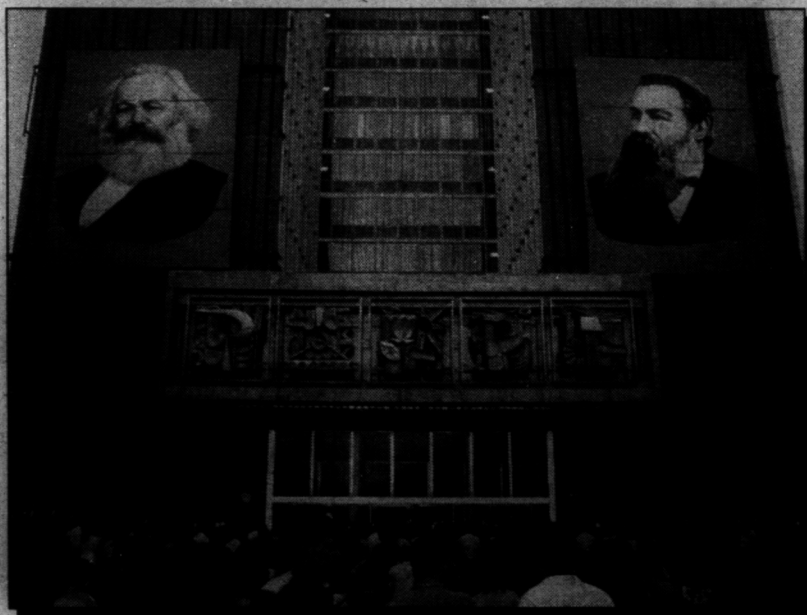
Man cannot live by bread alone. The hunger for God aches too deeply. So even people who reject him seek substitutes, like the worship of self, or nature, or drugs, or New Age idols.

All are counterfeits, like the "New Man" promised by communism. None fills the emptiness within.

That's why Christians should re-evangelize the West while they reach out to untouched regions.

The gospel, effectively communicated, could prevent the emergence of another ideology as destructive as communism.

This analysis is not a political statement. Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB) policy discourages its personnel from involvement in the politics of the countries where they relate. IMB personnel relate to communist countries only to share the good news of Jesus Christ.



STILL POWERFUL — Portraits of Karl Marx (left) and Friedrich Engels adorn a government building in Uzbekistan in 1991. Their influence persists on three continents, where governments use communist ideology to rule at least 1.5 billion people, despite the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. (BP photo by Don Rutledge)

Southwestern adds Islamic studies prof

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — As Islam continues rapidly to gain a foothold in the United States, Southwestern Seminary continues to respond, this time by appointing a full professor for its Islamic studies program, the only program of its kind among Southern Baptist educational institutions.

"Islam is no longer limited to the Middle East; it is in our own backyard and our pastors and lay people are not equipped to deal with it," said Samuel Shahid, who was named a full professor of missions March 10. Shahid has taught Islamic courses as an adjunct professor at Southwestern since 1988.

Southern Baptists put hunger funds on upswing

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Strengthened commitment by Southern Baptists to combat world hunger is reflected in gifts to the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund, which increased by nearly \$1 million dollars in 1997, for a total of \$7,966,663, an increase of 14.3% over 1996.

Often perplexing to viewers are the infomercials of private charities which tug the heart-strings while spending a large percentage of donations on salaries and airtime.

However, because Southern Baptists already have missionaries and volunteers in place, gifts to the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund are used 100% for hunger ministry, with nothing taken out for administration or promotion.

"We praise God for the generosity of Southern Baptists and many Christians of other denominations in their response to the world's hungry people," said Richard Land, president of Southern Baptists' Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), of the increase.

"It is time for the church to reaffirm its commitment concerning compassion for the poor. God has given us the opportunity to show his love in a very tangible way. Compassion opens hearts to hear the good news of Jesus Christ," Land stated.

Examples abound, such as the Brinkley Heights Church, Memphis, which used discount-

ed foods and volunteer labor to stretch \$8,000 in hunger funds into 64,000 meals last year.

This multiethnic church provides emergency food aid and counseling for families in need.

Southern Baptists recently chartered the world's largest cargo plane for massive food and medical aid to North Korea.

Through the use of dehydrated soup mix, \$1.40 in hunger funds provides meals for a victim of the North Korean famine for one month.

Food monitors are present to make certain the food gets where it is supposed to go.

In Argentina, \$1.70 provides milk for a hungry infant for one month.

During the 1997 Ohio River flooding, volunteers serving with Southern Baptist disaster relief units served hot meals to thousands of flood victims, utilizing \$45,000 in hunger funds.

While the media will always focus on strong cultural stances taken by the nation's largest Protestant denomination, such as the Disney boycott, their churches and more than 9,000 missionaries will go on quietly touching millions of lives.

As Sandy, a single mother in Washington, recently stated as she received a sack of groceries, "Thanks so much. Please, tell people to keep giving. It really helps a lot of people."

Further information about Southern Baptist anti-hunger

initiatives may be obtained by contacting the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, 901 Commerce St., #550, Nashville, TN 37203.

Tax-deductible contributions may be made payable to the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund, at the ERLC address listed to the left in this article.

Reconciliation speaker presents book



Dolphus Weary (left), featured speaker at a March 16 reconciliation workshop at the Baptist Building in Jackson and new executive director of Mission Mississippi, presents a copy of his autobiography, "I Ain't Coming Back," to Richard Allison (third from left), pastor of University Baptist Church in Hattiesburg. Also attending the workshop were (from left after Weary) Von Brown, pastor of Grace Community Church, Tchula; Robert Brown, pastor of Grace Community Church, Tchula; Richard Brown, consultant in the Mississippi Delta; and...

NAMES IN THE NEWS



J. Millard Purl (fourth from left), pastor of Hebron Church, Mississippi Association, was honored March 28 for 20 years of service as pastor of Hebron Church, for 50 years in the ministry, and for his 81st birthday. Joining the church in honoring Purl were family members (back row, from left) daughter-in-law Amy Purl, son John Purl, daughter Millie Zeigler, grandchildren Melanie and Daniel Zeigler, (front row, from left) granddaughters Lindsay and Laura Purl, and daughter Charlotte Purl. Millard Purl's wife Velma was unable to attend due to illness. John Purl and his family are Southern Baptist missionaries to Africa currently furloughing in Baton Rouge.

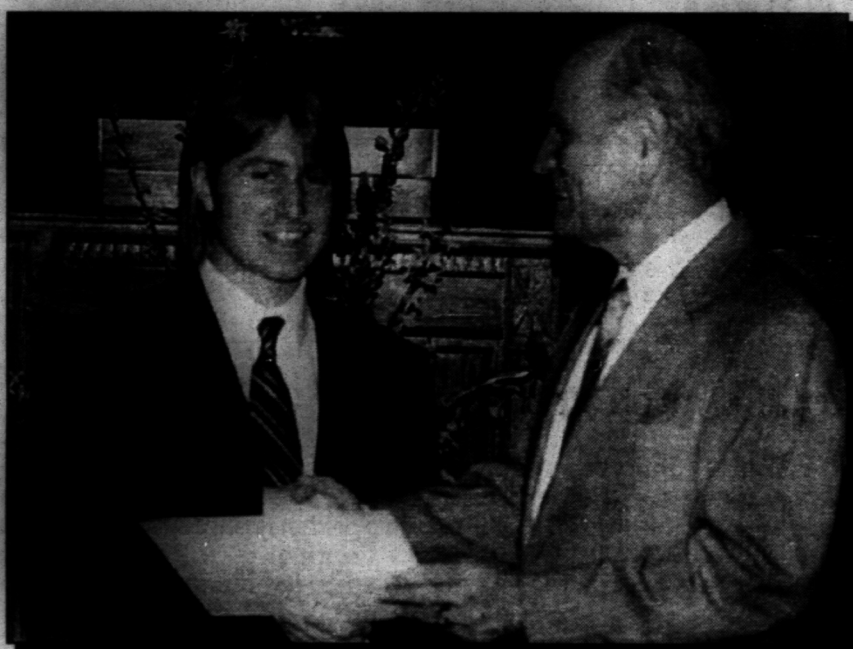
Revival Results

Blythe Creek, Mathiston: March 22-25; John Foles, Maben, evangelist; Sandra Williams, Mathiston, music; one profession of faith; two by letter; Danny Irvin, pastor.

Tylertown (Walthall): March 29-April 1; Jerry Mixon, Lucedale, evangelist; Hugh Plunkett, Clarksdale, music; 11 professions of faith; four by letter; David L. Sellers, pastor.

Marjorie F. Ellis, wife of Wes Ellis, who served as pastor of Goodwater, Magee, of First Church, Leakesville, and of Handsboro Church, Gulfport,

died March 19 in Rome, Ga. Funeral services were held at Pleasant Hope Church, Sliver Creek, Ga., where he is currently pastor.



First Church, Tupelo, recently licensed **Brian Smothers** to the ministry. Smothers, son of David and Jenny Smothers, is a student at Samford University, Birmingham, Ala. Pictured with Smothers is Gayle Alexander, pastor.



First Church, Tupelo, recently licensed **Jason Marlin** to the ministry. Marlin, son of Jerry and Delba Marlin, is a student at Blue Mountain College. Pictured with Marlin is Gayle Alexander, pastor.

REVIVAL DATES

Midway, Meridian: April 19-22; two services each day, 11 a.m.-12 noon and 7 p.m.; Stan Weatherford, Fairhope, Ala., evangelist; Sandi Sartor, Brandon, music; Keith Grubbs, pastor.

Antioch, Columbus: April 19-24; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Saturday, concert at 7 p.m.; Johnny Parrack, evangelist.

McDonald, Lena: April 16-18; 7 p.m.; Carroll Roberson, evangelist.

Liberty Hill, Pope: April 19-22; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Tommy Mitchell, Pearl, evangelist; J. L. Bailey, pastor.

Faith, Jackson: April 19-22; Sunday, 10:50 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 9:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; John Bewley, evangelist; Rick Sills, music; Buddy Wagner, pastor.

Broadmoor, Gulfport: April 26-29; services, Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. nightly; Donnie Guy, evangelist; Lucky Langston, Gulfport, music; Gerald H. Walker, pastor.

Bayou View, Gulfport: May 3-6; Experiencing God Revival; lay-led with Don Ball, a member of Woolmarket Church, teacher and leader; revival is based on the book and study course "Experiencing God" by Henry Blackaby; for more information, call (228) 863-2482.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

William Carey College will present the South Central Regional Music Therapy workshop April 17 and 18 from 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. at Pecan Shadows in Lumberton. Registration will begin at 7:30 a.m. in the lobby. Anyone who works with persons with handicapping conditions or people interested in music therapy are invited to attend the workshops. The registration fee is \$30. For more information, contact Paul Cotten at (601) 582-6416.

William Carey College (WCC) will host the 14th annual conference on the Elderly Mentally Handicapped Mississippians April 24 from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. in the Kresge Room of the Thomas Business Building on Hattiesburg campus. Mary Harper, formerly with the National Institute on Mental Health, will deliver the keynote address. Matt Janicki of the New

York Office of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disability will also present a session, "State of the Art Services for elderly persons with a developmental disability."

The seminar is sponsored by WCC, Mississippi Department of Mental Health, Boswell Regional Center, and the Mississippi Chapter of the American Association on Mental Retardation. The registration fee of \$10 includes the luncheon. For additional information or registration materials contact Paul Cotten at (601) 582-6416.

William Carey College will host the annual Minister's Golf Tournament May 18 at 1 p.m. and May 19 at 8 a.m. at the Timberline Golf Course in Hattiesburg. Entry fee for the tournament is \$90 per player. A \$30 deposit is due by April 23. The college will provide free lodging on campus and a com-

plimentary meal will be served on Monday evening. For more information and reservations call Larry Kennedy at (601) 582-6115.

Mississippi College Department of Music will present the Concert Ringers in concert April 14 at 8:15 p.m. in Provine Chapel. For additional information contact the Department of Music at (601) 925-3440.

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ALL SIZES
SALES AND RENTALS

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

April 9, 1998

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Office of Communication.

1998 Growing Churches Conferences

Growing Churches Through Bible Study

July 23-25

Seminars on total church growth
with an emphasis
on Sunday School.



Guest Speaker
Sam Cotter, director of
Sunday School Dept.,
Colorado Baptist
Convention

Both Growing Churches conferences include:

Six Study Sessions Led by Specialists

Three Dynamic Worship Services

• Sam Cotter will be preaching during the Bible
Study emphasis

• Rex Yancey will be preaching during the
Discipleship emphasis

• Gordon Alford will be the worship leader &
musician during the Discipleship emphasis

TeamKID Clubs for All Children

TeamKID Clubs for Older Preschoolers

Family Time on Friday Afternoons

Demonstration Lab School for Younger
Preschoolers

Discipling Bible Study for Youth

Guest Speaker
Rex Yancey,
pastor of
FBC, Pascagoula



Growing Churches Through Discipleship

July 30-Aug. 1

Seminars on total church growth
with an emphasis on
Discipleship and Family Ministry.

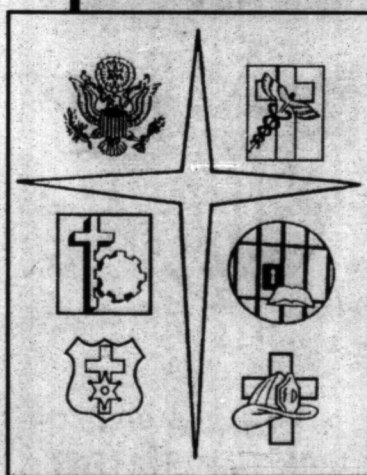
For reservation information, contact Frank Simmons, manager, Gulfshore Baptist Assembly,
100 First Street, Pass Christian, MS 39571-3299
Telephone: (228) 452-7261 Fax: (228) 452-7263

NOTE: Mastercard and Visa can be used for reservations and payment of bill.

Chaplain's Spring Retreat

The Mississippi Baptist Chaplain's Association will hold its annual Spring Retreat at Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, Pass Christian. It will begin at 5:00 p.m., Friday, May 1, and continue through lunch on Saturday, May 2, 1998.

James E. Hightower, Jr., director, pastoral counseling division of The McFarland Institute of New Orleans, Louisiana, will be the speaker. He has served as minister of pastoral care, FBC, Huntsville, Ala., a consultant in the Church Administration Department, Baptist Sunday School Board, Editor of *Proclaim* (national preaching journal of the SBC), has written for numerous publications and led training in pastoral care skills.



**Gulfshore
Baptist
Assembly**

May 1 - 2

*"The Chaplain as Peacemaker:
What To Do When Folks Start Fighting"*

Why Do People Break the Peace?
What To Do When Folks Start Fighting?
Preventing Conflict From Erupting?

Speaker: James Hightower



For more information, call Richard Brogan, Missions Extension and Associational Administration, MBCB, 1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3800.

Outreach Awareness Strategy Tour

9 a.m.-Noon

7-9 p.m.

Please note time change since the diary was printed.

Conference Locations

April 13 First Baptist Church, Vicksburg
April 14 First Baptist Church, Natchez
April 16 First Baptist Church, Brookhaven

Super Summer '98

July 20-24

Mississippi College, Clinton

with

Riek Caldwell



Super Summer
Mississippi
1998

For more information, call the Discipleship and Family Ministry
Department at 1-800-748-1651.

Tired of outreach events that don't seem to work? Weary of getting people to come to outreach nights? Are you confused about what to do to reach your neighborhood? We want to help. The Outreach Awareness/Strategy Tour is designed to help you develop a strategy to reach your community. The morning session, from 9 a.m.-noon is, specifically for pastors and key leaders, and is designed to help you begin developing a purposeful and personal strategy based on the particular situation God has placed you in. That evening, from 7-9 p.m., we want you to bring all of your leaders and we will have age group conferences that will help them focus on reaching the special needs of that age group. We hope that by the end of the day you will have all that is needed to pray about and develop a new and unified approach to outreach. For more information and registration form, call the Sunday School Department at 1-800-748-1651.

- Strategies for All Age Groups
- Demographics Available

Learning about Peer Pressure

Older Children's Retreat
Gulfshore Baptist Assembly

July 16-18, 1998

Cost: \$75



'Cool in the Son'

This retreat is especially for children who have completed grades 4-6 and their leaders. A registration form is available in the 1998 Gulfshore Baptist Assembly Information Brochure. To obtain a brochure, call Gulfshore Baptist Assembly at (228) 452-7261.

Don't Miss Out On This
Special Opportunity to Make
Some Wonderful Memories!



Registration Form

GA Father/Daughter Overnight - Camp Garaywa

April 17-18, 1998

Cost: \$23 per person

Deadline: Monday, April 13, 1998

Begins Friday at 5 p.m. and ends Saturday at noon.

Father's Name _____ Daughter's Name _____
Address _____ Phone Number _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
In case of emergency contact/phone number _____/
Church Name _____ Association _____

Amount Enclosed: \$23 x No. of persons _____ = \$ _____ (total)

Make checks payable to: Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
Mail to: WMU GA Father/Daughter Overnight, P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530

CENTRAL HILLS SUMMER CAMP - IT'S TIME FOR FUN!

SCHEDULE

Please choose a week which is free of schedule conflicts. Each camper is expected to remain at CHBR for the whole camp session.

1998 Summer Missions Resident Camp for ROYAL AMBASSADORS AND CHALLENGERS

June 15-19	July 13-17
June 22-26	July 20-24
June 29-July 3	July 27-31

Lad & Dad WEEKEND CAMP

June 26-27	July 10-11
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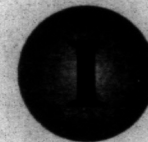
For more information or a registration form, contact Central Hills Baptist Retreat at 601-289-9730, Associational Offices, the State Brotherhood Department or Church offices.
(You may make copies of registration.)

1998 GA SUMMER CAMP DATES

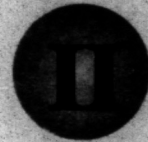
June 1-5	GA's grades 1 and 2	<i>If you are interested in attending camp or bringing a group, call the WMU Dept. at 1-800-748-1651 or 968-3800 for more information.</i>
June 8-12	Mother/Daughter	
June 15-19	Overnight: June 19-20	
June 22-26		
June 29-July 3	GA's grades 1-6	
July 6-10	Mother/Daughter	
July 13-17	Overnight: July 10-11	
July 20-24	Acteens Camp: July 24-26	

1998 SENIOR ADULT RETREATS

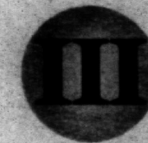
GULFSHORE BAPTIST ASSEMBLY
"EQUIPPING SENIORS FOR SERVICE"



May 19-22 (\$118 each)



May 25-27 (\$81.50 each)



May 28-30 (\$81.50 each)

Sponsored by the Discipleship & Family Ministry Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Registration Form Senior Adult Retreats

Mail after March 1 along with a \$30 deposit per senior adult to:
Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, 100 First Street,
Pass Christian, MS 39571, or call 228-452-7261.

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Church/Association _____

___ Sr. Adult I

___ Sr. Adult II

___ Sr. Adult III



Pray this day for...

April 9-23, 1998

Prayer Ministry Office • P. O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 968-3800, Ext. 3904 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-PRAY

Watch and Pray

The Practice of Prayer

It has pleased the Lord to teach me a truth. The first thing to be concerned about was not how much I might serve the Lord, or how I might glorify the Lord, but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished. Before this time my practice had been to give myself to prayer after having dressed in the morning. Now I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God, and to meditation on it. My heart being nourished by the truth, I speak to my Father and to my Friend about the things that He brought before me in his precious Word.

George Muller from METHOD IN PRAYER by W. Graham Scroggie

Missionaries to Brazil, John and Kathy Vaughn, want to thank those of us who prayed for them during the VBS and "Five Languages of Love" seminar in March. When Kathy visited in some homes of the children who attended VBS, two families accepted the offer of Bible studies in their homes.

For Cooperative Program day (Stewardship Emphasis). Rejoice with Mississippi Baptists for 1997's outstanding year of Cooperative giving. As our churches continue cooperating, we have a better chance of reaching our goal of bringing Mississippi and the world to Christ.

For the Outreach Awareness/Strategy tour; FBC, Vicksburg; sponsored by the SS Dept. State Bible Drills; FBC, Biloxi/FBC, Senatobia; sponsored by Discipleship and Family Ministry. State Secretaries Conference; Camp Garaywa; sponsored by Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries.

For State Bible Drills; FBC, Meridian/FBC, Hattiesburg; sponsored by Discipleship and Family Ministry. Start Something New Rally; Camp Garaywa; sponsored by the Witness Team.

For Church Facilities Workshop; Parkway BC, Clinton; sponsored by the Church Building Service. Outreach Awareness/Strategy Tour; FBC, Natchez; sponsored by the SS Dept. State Bible Drills; FBC, Brookhaven/FBC, Greenwood; sponsored by Discipleship and Family Ministry.

For State Bible Drill; FBC, Wiggins; sponsored by Discipleship and Family Ministry. Senior Adult Choir Festival; Emmanuel BC, Grenada; sponsored by Church Music Department.

Three Tswana students currently attend the Baptist Theological Seminary of Zimbabwe. They are planning to return to their homeland, Botswana, after they graduate. Pray that they will help our missionaries begin new work during school holidays among the Tswana people of southern Zimbabwe.

Join Baptist representatives Russell and Melinda Kyzar in giving thanks to God that a woman attending the Friday evening Bible study in Moscow has become a Christian! Please pray that her husband will also respond to God's love and accept Christ.

For the Outreach Awareness/Strategy Tour; FBC, Brookhaven; sponsored by the SS Dept. State Bible Drills; FBC, Tupelo/Calvary BC, Tupelo; sponsored by Discipleship and Family Ministry.

"For Pastors Only" Bible Leadership Retreat; Eagle Ridge Conf. Center, Raymond; sponsored by the Bible Study Team. Pray for the handful of Mongol believers who are attempting to cross the border into China to share with the Mongols of Inner Mongolia.

Lay Renewal revivals are taking place in a number of our Mississippi churches sponsored by the Brotherhood. Pray especially for the one in Alta Woods Church, Jackson, May 1-3.

There are over 40,000 registered taxi cabs in Taipei, Taiwan. Pray that efforts to place audio gospel and Scripture tapes in the hands of these drivers will be successful.

10

11

For State Bible Drills; FBC, Starkville/Calvary BC, Starkville; sponsored by Discipleship and Family Ministry. GA Father/Daughter Overnight; Camp Garaywa; sponsored by the WMU. Mississippi Baptists in Broadcasting; Calvary BC, Jackson; sponsored by Department of Broadcast Services.

For State Bible Drills; Ridgecrest BC, Madison/FBC, Clinton; sponsored by Discipleship and Family Ministry. Ask the Lord to grant wisdom and favor to those who are currently sharing the love of Christ in Algeria.

15

20

21

22

23

Building For the 21st Century



Preschool/Children Leadership Festival

A Conference for Reaching and Teaching Future Generations

Trinity Baptist Church
Southaven, Mississippi
May 1-2, 1998

Registration begins 3 p.m. Friday
Program concludes Saturday, 12:15 p.m.

Program fee: \$12.50
Catfish dinner Friday night: \$6

A ministry of
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board,
Tennessee Baptist Convention, and
Arkansas Baptist Convention

For more information, call the Sunday School
Department at 1-800-748-1651.

SCHEDULE

Friday, May 1, 1998

- 3:00 p.m. Registration begins
- 3:30 p.m. Early Bird Shift
- 4:30 p.m. Early Bird Shift
- 5:00 p.m. Supper begins
- 6:30 p.m. "Ground Breaking"
- 7:00 p.m. "Foreman's Report" - Willa Ruth Garlow
- 8:15 p.m. Tool and Trade Show
Tool Show: 12 interactive booths on Preschool and Children Activities
Trade Show: Baptist Book Store plus vendors to aid in your ministry.
- 9:15 p.m. Show's Over

Saturday, May 2, 1998

- 7:30 a.m. Early Bird Shift
- 8:45 a.m. 2nd Shift
- 10:00 a.m. 3rd Shift
- 11:15 a.m. 4th Shift
- 12:15 a.m. Quittin' Time

Program fee: \$12.50

Catfish dinner Friday night: \$6

There will be six conference periods (shifts) with a total of 25 conferences for Preschool, Children, and Weekday teachers, and staff.

RESERVATION REQUESTS

PRESCHOOL/CHILDREN LEADERSHIP FESTIVAL MAY 1-2, 1998

Individual Request

Mr., Mrs., Miss _____
Phone _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

Church Group Request

Church _____
Phone _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

Contact Person _____
Registration fee: \$12.50 each
Total Reservations for Program Fee:
Number _____
Amount \$ _____

Catfish Dinner
Carriage Hills Baptist Church, Southaven
Friday, 5-6:15 p.m.
Catfish Dinner: \$6 each
Total Reservations for Catfish Dinner:
Number _____
Amount \$ _____

Registration deadline: April 15, 1998

Space limited to 1,000 persons

No refund after April 15, 1998

Make checks payable to:
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
Mail to:
Linda Reeves, MBCB
P. O. Box 530
Jackson, MS 39205-0530

Confirmation letter will contain:
Maps to Trinity Baptist Church, and Carriage Hills Baptist Church, and a listing of hotels.

HOUSE TOPS

HOLD ON TO JESUS

Editor:

I heard an interview lately of an artist who has traveled the globe. She said Jesus was the best thing that ever happened to her.

That is right, she repeated. Jesus is at the top of my list. Zen-Buddha is second, she said. After that there is Mohammed and she named some others.

I hope she will hold on to Jesus and leave Zen-Buddha, and the others behind. Let us who are Christians remember, we are happy because we are members of the "Body of Christ."

Let us not forget to pray. There is power in prayer.

Katherine A. Ferrero
Saltillo

PK CHANGES LIVES

Editor,

There has been some negative publicity about Promise Keepers lately, and this has caused us to ponder, pray, and search the Scriptures about what has happened in our lives because of Promise Keepers and what this ministry stands for.

God has drastically changed our lives and it all started in July, 1994, in Boulder, Colo. God has blessed, revealed, and equipped us through Promise Keepers, and this has changed not only me, my wife, and my children but also our church and community.

People can write letters against Promise Keepers, but praise God, it will not change what he has done in our lives.

There seems to be a "...morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words..." (1 Tim. 6:3-5) with regard to Promise Keepers. Promise Keepers clearly seeks to follow God's Word, not that

of men, "...sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ..." (1 Tim. 6:3-5).

Jesus said in John 17:22-23, "And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me."

We thank God that he has opened our eyes to his Word, the things of this world, and how he is at work. May he continue to use whatever vehicle he so desires to speak to his people.

Victor and Debbie Horn
Houston

PK IS OBEDIENCE

Editor,

This is the first letter to the editor I have ever written. I may not be an expert but the letter from Bennett Blanton in The Baptist Record has motivated me to comment.

The "promoting of unity" (Col 3:13,14) referred to in his letter is not only sound biblical doctrine but a fact I have experienced first hand numerous times in Promise Keepers (PK) events.

Never in any PK event have I seen any hint of anything contrary to biblical instructions or to the Baptist doctrine that Southern Baptists embrace.

The principle is to invite brothers in Christ to come together in love to forgive, confess, repent, pray, and fellowship.

In fact anyone lacking "sound doctrine," (biblical doctrine), would feel out of place in a PK gathering since indeed the Holy Spirit is present.

My understanding of witnessing to the world is to tell what God is doing in my life. PK is a wonderful miracle of racial reconciliation between me and my brothers in Christ of other races.

I believe that God initiated this miracle in me to bring me to know him better, because my racial prejudice has been a barrier between God and me.

Love, present at the gatherings, is the proof to me that God is in charge of PK and my life.

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GIANT TWISTER AND MORE!!

Call for free full-color brochure
Largest prices in the nation!

The church is us when Christ is our Lord and Master. I believe love, unity, and forgiveness are our personal business as it is the business of PK.

Paul Brummett
-Madison

TIRED OF SINFULNESS?

Editor:

Many people blame circumstances today on El Nino or "Mother Nature."

We need to see that disasters are not from El Nino, but El Shaddai, not "Mother Nature" but Father God.

God's Word is clear that he judges people who have turned from him.

People often say, "God doesn't work that way anymore." God tells us, "I, the Lord, never change." (Mal. 3:6) Since God never changes, he works the same way always.

When we begin to make the connection between people turning from God and calamities, we will begin to see our turning as an act that displeases him.

The people of God have turned from him by no longer reading and implementing his Word in their lives. Some will say, "I believe God's Word but their actions and words say otherwise. Perhaps we as Christians need to return to God's standard in his Word."

People have turned from keeping the Sabbath holy. Companies exploit the workers' need to worship God by working on Sunday. All businesses operate on Sunday for the love of mammon, not the employees' welfare.

God is a jealous God. He will not tolerate his people putting things before him, in their lives.

Today many people seem to be more concerned with mak-

ing a living, recreation, or Sunday lunch at a restaurant rather than being the covenant people of God.

If we're tired of the sinfulness of this world we might want to put God's Word back in our lives and put worship of God back on our priority of the Sabbath.

Bill Jernigan, pastor
Pilgrims Rest Church
Crystal Springs

REUNION ANNOUNCED

Editor:

All summer missionaries in 1988 at the Gano Mission Center in inner city Houston, are invited to a 10-year reunion.

Send your address to: Julie Ford Davis, 2100 Skillman Drive, Garland, TX 75041. Telephone: (972) 278-7849. E-mail: julied3@juno.com.

Julie Ford Davis
Garland, TX

HISTORY INFO NEEDED

Editor:

Clarksdale Baptist Church will be having their Centennial Celebration on August 2, 1998.

At this time we are trying to complete our history book of the church.

We would like for anyone that has information on Clarksdale Baptist Church, pictures, or other memorabilia during the years 1898-1998 to share them with us.

If you have a special memory or a "Remember When" to share, please send it also.

Label all material so that we may return it to you.

Mail to: Emma Jean Childress, 1202 Park Circle Drive, Clarksdale MS 38614. Telephone: (601) 624-4824.

Emma Jean Childress
Clarksdale

STAFF CHANGES

First Church, Ripley, has called Albert W. Wilkerson as pastor. A native of Coldwater, Wilkerson is a graduate of Clarke College, Blue Mountain College, New Orleans Seminary, and Luther Rice Seminary. He previously served at Balmoral Church, Memphis.

Clarke Venable Memorial Church, Decatur, has called James Wilson as minister of education, outreach, and youth effective March 15. Wilson is a recent graduate of New Orleans Seminary.

Union Church, Raleigh, has called Stephen Forfer as pastor effective March 1. His previous place of service was First Church, Chataignier, La. A native of New Orleans, Forfer is a graduate of New Orleans Seminary. He may be reached at (601) 782-4747 (church) or 782-9558 (home).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

Homecomings

Airport, Grenada: May 3; lunch at church, singing in afternoon featuring Kilgore Sisters.

Crowder (North Delta): Aug. 9; homecoming and dedication of sanctuary; homecoming will not be the fourth Sunday in April due to the sanctuary renovation.

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1,200 lbs. shed in church's First Place program

TAYLOR, Mich. (BP) — Some folk at Evangel Church, Taylor, Mich., are wondering why a women's group is half its former size. Fact is, however, they haven't lost a single soul — just a lot of excess baggage.

From January 1997-January 1998, members of the First Place weight-loss classes at the suburban Detroit church dropped more than 1,200 pounds and 695 inches off their collective bodies.

The weight is continuing to vanish. "We don't need a building program because we naturally have more room," joked senior pastor Ron Graef.

"All the pews have gotten larger," chimed in assistant pastor Ken Pyne.

All kidding aside, Graef said he has noticed a marked difference in the 66 women currently enrolled in the church's weight-control classes.

"First Place: A Christ-Centered Health Program," published by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, carries with it a spiritual emphasis and focuses on giving Christ first place in all areas of life — physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional.

"You can see their determination; their sense of satisfaction; their victory, and their camaraderie," Graef said.

or pray with someone, and I know the women do this.

"Sometimes God leads them to call a friend in the program at a certain time without them really understanding why, and many times it turns out the girl is just going through a difficult time.

"I've seen a lot of changes in the women taking this program," Simmonds said. "I've noticed their peace, confidence, and felt the spiritual change. When you start talking to people in the program, you realize it's not only about weight, but about Bible study and prayer."

Simmonds said "desperation" was the driving force behind her latest attempt to lose weight.

"A year ago, it was a struggle for me to walk from the front of the house to the back. I was not an active person at all. My body was not a body to serve God. I couldn't do the ministries I could have been doing if I didn't have all that weight."

Before becoming too self-conscious of her body, Simmonds said she had been involved in her husband's ministry to the deaf at their church. She stood with him to perform sign interpretation during Sunday worship until she began to feel her appearance was a hindrance to his work.

About four years ago, Simmonds said, she and other women at the church tried starting a weight-loss program in which she prepared the materials.

"We met every week, but it was hard, and we didn't have any accountability as far as the women writing down everything they ate," she said. "We prayed for each other and we encouraged each other, but we weren't losing any weight." Later, a water aerobics class failed in a similar fashion, she said.

"Then one of the girls approached me a year ago last October and said she heard about First Place, so I called (the Sunday School Board) and they sent me some pamphlets and preview material."

After a lot of prayer — Simmonds



HANGING IN THERE — Debe White (right) weighs in Marilyn Wessels just before First Place classes. Since starting the program, Wessels has lost 37 pounds and has been taken off two types of medication. White has lost over 100 pounds on the program. (BP photo by Jim Veneman)

refuses to make a move without first talking to God about it — seven women decided to start the program.

First Place member Roxanne Owen had an addiction to the soda, Mountain Dew. She said the "Lord told me to focus on giving up one thing, and that was Mountain Dew."

"I prayed for the love of good food and the hatred of Mountain Dew."

Owen, who hasn't popped the top of a Mountain Dew for five months, said she feels like she's been released from bondage.

"I needed deliverance. I was bound to Mountain Dew, but now I have a freedom from bondage to food."



BALANCED PROGRAM — Exercise is one of the nine commitments of First Place. First Place members get together before class to exercise. Besides walking a specified route inside the church, they also play volleyball. Among participants are (from left): Liz Musham, Lisa Maynard, and Elaine Haynes. (BP photo by Jim Veneman)

Camaraderie seems to be a byproduct of accountability, one of the most important elements of the spiritual weight-loss program, according to Evangel's First Place director, Nancy Simmonds, who has lost more than 100 pounds since beginning the program in January 1997.

"First Place is different than all the other weight-loss programs I've tried because of the accountability to each other and to God," Simmonds said. "We encourage each other often. Because we are humans, we tend to see the negative, so we use the tools of First Place to be positive."

Taking partners, the women in the program pray for each other daily, she said. They also make phone calls of encouragement.

"One First Place commitment (there are nine) is to make one phone call a week to encourage

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JAMES E. MESSER, SR. Staff Evangelist, First Baptist Church, Theodore, AL. Has choice dates open for '98. Call 1-800-653-6652.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD



WMU Emphasis Day was celebrated at First Church, Batesville, with the theme of "Hats off to the WMU." All WMU organizations from mission friends through women on missions wore hats that day to show their support for missions. Some hats were new, some were old, and some were homemade. Pictured (from left) are Claire Alexander, Dot Foster, and Georgia Qualls.

Spring Hill Church, Marshall Association, will present the Easter Cantata "Behold the Lamb," at 11 a.m. on April 12. The choir is under the direction of Vic Wilson. Sunday School will be held at 10 a.m.

The Second Annual Poplarville Community Good Friday Service will be held on April 10, 7 p.m., at First Church, Poplarville. Fourteen churches have already committed to participate in the interracial, interdenominational service. This year's theme is "The Last Week of Christ." A reception will be held in the Family Life Center of First Church. For more information, call the church at (601) 795-4531.

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The Women's Auxiliary of New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) will hold its spring meeting April 16, 10 a.m., at Carey Hall, NOBTS. Jerry Pounds, chairman of the Division of Christian Education Ministries will be guest speaker. For more information, call (504) 282-0824.

RAs and GAs of Cloverdale Church, Natchez, will present the Easter play "Snapshots of the King," April 12 at 5 p.m.

First Church, Jackson, will sponsor the 1998 Singles Spring Retreat at SeaChase Resort, Gulf Shores, Ala., May 22-25. The fee is \$165 with a deposit of \$50 (non refundable after April 10). For more information call the Singles Ministry at First Church (601) 949-1906.

Easter Sunrise Service will be held at Lakewood Memorial Park, Jackson, on April 12 at 7 a.m. For more information call (601) 922-2123.

Vaiden Church, Vaiden, will sponsor its annual Trail Ride on April 17 and 18. A fish fry will be held Friday night at 6 p.m., followed by a gospel singing. The trail ride will begin on Saturday at 9 a.m. Free camping will be available on Friday night. A light breakfast will be available on Saturday morning. The registration fee is \$10/individual or \$25/family, which will include a sack lunch. The money raised will go to a Benevolence Fund, which helps individuals in need.

A negative Coggins test is required. For more information call (601) 464-5664.

First Church, Louise, will host a Bible Preaching Conference on April 16, 17, and 18. Worship will begin each day at 3 p.m. until 6 p.m., a meal will be served, and worship at 7 p.m. "Preachers should come prepared to preach from the King James Bible only," said Charles McCollum, pastor. For more information, call (601) 836-5308 or 836-5310.



Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

LifeAnswers

My husband is a good minister, but he treats his own family with cruelty and meanness. How can I deal with this problem?

First of all, consider how he was raised. Did he have nurturing parents, or was he forced to seek affirmation outside the home? Your husband may not feel comfortable around the house because of personal insecurities and frustrations.

When you sense he is getting frustrated, encourage him to talk with you about what is bothering him. Possibly the two of you could get away for a day so you could communicate without distractions.

Ministers are only human and are therefore subject to the same struggles we all encounter. While that statement isn't meant to excuse his conduct, it may help explain why he treats his family as he does.

A pair of good books for both of you are "Intimate Encounters" by David and Teresa Ferguson, and "Five Love Languages" by Gary Chapman. These books contain exercises that will bring both of you closer to understanding what is going on. It is

through understanding that change is brought about.

I have lost much of my zeal for the Lord, because certain people in my church show so little love and concern for others. How can I recover that zeal?

The church is filled with (a) sinners who make mistakes, and (b) people who unfortunately are not serving the Lord as they should. Don't focus on others' shortcomings, but rather on your own work as uniquely given to you by God.

Study Col. 3:23-34. Have you thought about becoming a leader to turn your church around? There are probably others in the church who share your feelings. Start a Sunday School or discipleship training class, where you can share your vision with like-minded church members.

If you remain discouraged, counsel with the Lord through prayer about your place of service. He will provide the answer.

Don't give up on your church too quickly, however. You could be the catalyst for change that makes your church a stronger witness for Christ.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

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(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.
(I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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WMU to hold CWJC training

Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) organizations in seven states will hold Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC) certification training events between May and October of this year. CWJC is a ministry to provide women in need with life skills and employment skills in a missions context. In Mississippi, the training event will be held May 21-23 in a Hattiesburg location to be announced later. For more information, contact Linda Tate at (601) 854-7797.

Supreme Court rejects 'silence' challenge

WASHINGTON (ABP) — The U.S. Supreme Court refused March 23 to hear a professor's challenge to "generic" prayers and moments of silence at functions conducted at Tennessee State University (TSU) in Nashville.

Left standing was a ruling by the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that generic, non-sectarian prayers and moments of silence at university events do not violate the principle of church-state separation in the U.S. Constitution.

The Nashville university's policies were challenged by Dilip Chaudhuri, a tenured mechanical-engineering professor and a practicing Hindu.

Chaudhuri objected to a custom of prayers being offered at graduation exercises, faculty meetings, dedication ceremonies, and guest lectures.

Following complaints by Chaudhuri, TSU officials decided that all such prayers at university events would be "generic" and nonsectarian.

Their decision was based on an opinion from the state university system's general counsel.

In January 1991, Chaudhuri took his complaint to a federal district court, where he asserted that the prayer policy violated the First Amendment's ban on governmental establishment of religion and its guarantee of free exercise of religion.

After the lawsuit was filed, TSU changed its policy to include a moment of silence, rather than a verbal prayer, at graduation exercises.

Two years later the district court dismissed Chaudhuri's First Amendment claims.

In upholding that decision, the appeals court said generic prayers had a secular purpose of dignifying or memorializing a public event, and that they did not entangle church and state and did not impermissibly advance or inhibit religion.

The appeals court also brushed aside Chaudhuri's free-exercise claim.

"Having found that Dr. Chaudhuri was not required to participate in any religious exercise, we conclude that his free-exercise claim is without merit," the court said.

"There has been no showing that his practice of Hinduism was constrained or abridged in any way," the court said.

The appeals court distinguished the university's practices from clergy-led prayers at middle school and high school

graduation exercises, which were previously ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1992.

In that ruling, the high court said clergy-led prayers at Rhode Island middle school graduation ceremonies were coercive.

In contrast, the practices at TSU involved "no coercion - real or otherwise - to participate in nonsectarian prayers," the appeals court said.

Staying Well Informed

Sleep Disorders: More Common Than You Think

Tom is a 42-year-old salesman who's good at his job and is in fairly good health. But recently, he's had trouble sleeping and has been unable to keep his mind on his work. His supervisor noticed his situation and told him to get help. Tom's family doctor couldn't find evidence of major health problems, but sent him to the Sleep Disorders Center at Baptist Medical Center to determine the cause of his sleepiness.

After spending a night in the sleep lab, where Tom's heart rate, brain activity and other vital signs were monitored, specialists found that he is one of an estimated 10 million Americans who suffers from sleep apnea, a disorder in which breathing - and sleep - are disrupted hundreds, even thousands of times a night. With the use of a device to assist his breathing, Tom now has restful, uninterrupted sleep, making him more refreshed and aware.

Today, about half of Americans suffer from sleeplessness. Lack of sleep costs more than \$18 billion annually in lost work productivity, and it accounts for more than 100,000 traffic accidents each year. "Many people have a sleep disorder of which they are not aware," said Dr. William Frazier, a Jackson lung and sleep specialist who serves as Medical Director of Baptist's Sleep Disorders Center. "But sleep problems can have effects that go far beyond the night time and are often associated with serious problems during the waking hours."

Major sleep disorders include sleep apnea, restless legs and narcolepsy. Many of these conditions can be improved or eliminated with lifestyle changes, counseling, medical equipment or drugs. If you think you may have a sleep disorder, seek the help of a specialist. You might find yourself awakened to a whole new world.

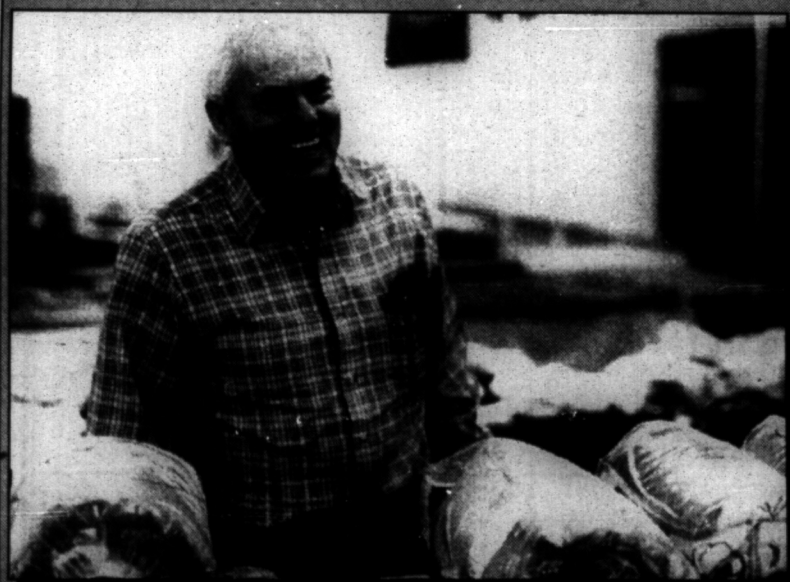
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Where the people are...



Hassell Garrett of Fort Payne, Ala., longtime Baptist preacher and flea market enthusiast, is one of the pastors who volunteers to take church where the people are for a Sunday morning worship service each time the Tupelo Furniture Market holds a flea market. A record 140 dealers and other people attended a recent worship service before the flea market opened. The worship service was started by Bill Smith, director of Lee Association in Tupelo, and Garrett is happy to participate in the program. (Photo by Tim Nicholas)

LIFE AND WORK

The basis for right and wrong

Gen. 3:1-6, Is. 5:20-21, Mal. 2:17,
Mark 10:17-31, 1 John 1:5; 1 Peter 1:15-1

By Jim Burnett

"God said it, I believe it, and that settles it." To the unbelieving, pagan people of the world today who make their own rules and manufacture their own truths, these are the words of an ignorant, religious fanatic.

Today we begin a much-needed three-week study entitled "Deciding Right from Wrong." Americans seem to be suffering from spiritual amnesia. There is little awareness of God in society and no tolerance of His Word in school or government.

Who's to blame for our country's spiritual demise? Why is there such a cloud of doubt hanging over the plausi-

bility of the Bible? Why are there no longer any moral absolutes? Is the problem in the White House or church house?

God's people must receive new convictions concerning God's Word, for the brand of Christianity being practiced today prostitutes the Word of God making us odious to our Creator. We must stop attempting to please this world and ourselves by diluting the Bible. "The truth does not change according to our ability to stomach it." Neither does truth blush.

God is the appropriate authority in defining and determining right and wrong and he has done so in what we know as



Burnett

the Bible. Therefore, our task is not to change the truth but proclaim it, love it, and live it.

We do not determine right and wrong (Gen. 3:1-6). Eve became Satan's first human victim as she swallowed the serpent's lie "hook, line, and sinker."

How did this happen?

Eve and Adam fell prey to Satan the moment they allowed their adversary to bring into question the Word of God.

My friends, to question the integrity of God and His Word is spiritual suicide. Many so-called Christians today treat the laws and principles of our Lord as if they were a buffet. No wonder the church is having such little impact on a lost world. We've been feeding on half-truths too long.

Only God is good (Mark 10:17-18; 1 John 1:5). Society's spiritual demise today can quickly be traced to man's futile attempt to find a viable

substitute or replacement for the standards of God.

Jesus rebuked the rich man for his brassy statement, which smacked of humanism. Referring to Jesus as good teacher, this man foolishly presumed he was capable of determining, from his own intellect, the proper moral standards. Only the born-again have the capacity for knowing the mind of Christ and ability for discerning what is right and wrong.

God is the basis for right and wrong (1 Peter 1:15-16). Why should Christians strive to be holy and pure? Is it so God will one day let us into heaven? Is it so we can escape hell?

Emphatically, no! Being holy is a byproduct of being right with Christ. Like a little boy that longs to be like his dad, trailing him wherever he goes, mimicking his daddy's gestures, we too want to be like our heavenly Father. And to be like God is to be right, good, holy, true, and pure.

Human standards often are counter to God's standard (Isaiah 5:20-21; Mal 2:17). The laws of the land today reflect an undeniable apostasy in America. A reversal in values is taking place. What the Bible deems wicked and evil, culture calls good and wholesome.

Public opinion polls, majority rule, and legislation today determine the standards of society. But the consequences of altering the Word of God are serious: "It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God." And yet this is our destiny if we continue to replace the standard of God with the standards of men.

The Word of God, as someone has said, is an anvil that has worn out many hammers. You can criticize it, rewrite it, disobey it, doubt it, but you will never change God's eternal Word. You will never replace His eternal standard.

Burnett is pastor of Raymond Road Church, Jackson.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Faith in Jesus as Risen Lord

John 20:14-21, 24-29

By Harold W. Simmons

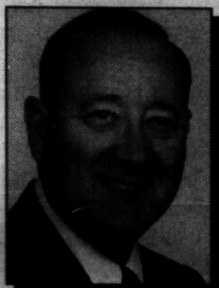
Only two of the gospels record the birth of Jesus which suggest that only Luke and Matthew considered the birth narrative to be important. In contrast, all four gospels record the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord. I believe that this is the most important segment of the recorded story of the earthly ministry of Jesus.

See and tell (20:14-18). Mary Magdalene came the second time that morning to the tomb of Jesus and was rewarded for her efforts to understand the unusual events she had witnessed.

On this visit to the empty tomb, Mary saw and had a verbal exchange with two angels. At this time her mind did not believe what she had seen and heard.

It is not surprising that she did not recognize the Master whom she knew, loved, and served. When Jesus spoke to Mary, she assumed that he was the gardener. Ah, but when he called her name, she responded so positively that she spoke not in Greek but in her native, intimate language, Aramaic.

Note that the resurrected Savior revealed himself first to a woman and not to his disci-



Simmons

ples who a short time before had raced to the tomb. Jesus instructed Mary to go to the disciples and tell them what she had seen and heard.

Emotional swing from fear to joy (20:19-21). Try to put yourself in the locked room with the disciples and feel the tension they experienced

after their leader had been put to death and a woman reported that she had seen and talked with the Savior.

It is possible that the followers of Jesus feared they would be called to tell what they knew about the disappearance of Jesus' body. Suddenly, Jesus was in the room with them. Obviously he did not come in by the door because the gospel recorded that the door was locked.

John did not reveal how Jesus got into the room. Perhaps for his eastern mind

"how" was not important, but the important fact was Jesus appeared and gave them a mission of their own.

Just as suddenly as Jesus appeared and spoke to them, the fear of the disciples left and was replaced by joy. Jesus sent them out as the Father had sent him. Jesus came in power and with authority. He came to bring salvation and bought it with great price. He gave his followers power and authority as they witnessed about him.

Assurance and proclamation (20:24-29). Modern Bible readers have focused on the doubt of Thomas so much that we should change his name to Thomas the "doubtamous" rather than Thomas Didymus (the twin).

I believe that Thomas, who was not present when the resurrected Jesus first presented himself to the other disciples, found it difficult to believe only an oral witness. He needed a visual wit-

ness of the resurrection to confirm what he wanted to believe.

Actually, Thomas said that he needed both to see and to touch in order to confirm what the other disciples said. However, when Jesus confronts Thomas a week later, Thomas needed no more evidence than the other disciples received which was the sound of his Master's voice and the sight of his wounds. Thomas was unable to control himself and burst forth with confession and adoration.

Invitation and proclamation. If you have asked for more evidence of the risen Lord before you will trust him to take your sin away, all you need to do is to listen to him as he speaks to your heart and "stop doubting and believe."

If you are a believer, then celebrate and proclaim with me. He is risen! He is Risen Indeed!

Simmons is pastor of Hebron Church, Grenada.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

A time for faith

Mark 15:33-1:8

By Grace Graham

The shadow of death (15:33-38). People facing the death of a loved one or other crises sometimes lose hope. The death of Jesus was accompanied by darkness at noon, the sixth hour. This was a graphic picture of the struggle with evil.

Darkness was a fitting sign for God to give to those who had rejected the Light of the world. Amos 9:9 gave a prophecy describing the sun going down at noon as a manifestation of God's judgement. Are you one in the dark, not having accepted God's gift of Jesus, the Light of the world?

Jesus hung on the cross in agony ridiculed and mocked. At the ninth hour, or 3 p.m., he

cried out to the Father in his native language, Aramaic, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

Even at the point of his death, Jesus used scripture to describe his despair. He began quoting Psalm 22:1. By reading the rest of the Psalm, we see that the despair of the beginning is replaced by resounding victory. "They shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this."

There are many verses of scripture that could have described suffering. Do you suppose that Jesus chose Psalm 22 with the cry of triumph in mind?

His tormented utterance may have a second implication. Jesus, emptied of his God-like



Graham

qualities was man. Yet he had never experienced sin. Man's sin came upon him for his redemptive death. This was the first time he had experienced the hopeless feeling of separation from God caused by sin.

God did not abandon Jesus. Nor does he ever leave us. Sin has a way of

keeping us from experiencing the peace and completeness that only God can give. Jesus knows the sensation of that barrier.

Jesus uttered a "loud cry" and took his last breath. The tearing in two of the great curtain of the temple allowed anyone to look at will into the holiest place of all: the "Holy of Holies." Such symbolism shows how the broken body of Christ removed all barriers between God and man. There is now direct access to God for all through Christ!

The light of revelation (15:39). A Roman centurion was on duty that day at the cross. He must have wondered about the identi-

ty of Jesus. He encountered Jesus, saw him die and believed. This Gentile soldier recognized and confessed Jesus as the Son of God.

The basis of faith (16:1-8). Friends of Jesus had been in a great hurry three days earlier to get him laid into the borrowed tomb before the sabbath began. Now the women returned to the burial place to use the proper spices for embalming the dead.

The women were anxious as to how they would remove the heavy stone. The thing that they themselves could never do, God had already done. The stone had been rolled away! Jesus' body was gone. The women were shocked to say the least. The angel tried to calm them. He explained that Jesus had risen. He wanted them to report to the disciples that Jesus would meet them in Galilee.

This incredible occurrence has been witnessed by Mary Magdalene and Jesus' mother, Mary. These women had an encounter with an angel but had not yet met the Lord himself.

They did not give the message to the disciples. They fled in fear. This news was too great and wonderful to grasp all at once.

God exists in a perfect place where there is no sin, no sorrow, only goodness and joy. All of mankind by nature sin. How can we come to this perfect place to be with God if we bring our sin along? We cannot.

God has a plan. Jesus came to this earth to take our sin to the cross. He died, but is alive today, victorious over sin and evil. God offers this free gift to everyone, but like any other gift, it will not become yours if you do not take it.

Pray today agreeing with God that you are a sinner. Tell him that you turn from your sin and walk toward him. Tell him that you know that Jesus' death and resurrection was sufficient to save you. Pray for Jesus to be your Saviour and allow him to lead you in your life choices today!

Graham is Childhood Education Director at First Church, Gulfport.

Analysis: Will atheism ever replace religion?

By Erich Bridges
International Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Through the years, communism and socialism have worn as many faces as the leaders who

have built totalitarian governments around them. Theoretically, communism is an economic utopia, a stage past socialism.

In socialism, leaders need to use a political structure as opposed to individual initiative to share work and wealth and create prosperity. Communism's goal, however, is to be stateless and classless.

Communist and socialist leaders in many countries have diligently taught this godless doctrine to their children for more than 80 years, ingraining a blind adherence to this hopeless religion that stresses:

◆ There is no god. To believe in God is to place value in an entity you esteem higher than the Communist Party or the chairman dictator.

To preach Jesus Christ as holding a future for you is to acknowledge a power higher than the state exists.

◆ The higher nature of man will lead him to create a perfect materialism in which no man rules another and everyone prospers.

To believe perfection is found only outside this material world and that man is a sinner who needs grace from God is to disbelieve this key principle.

◆ There is no eternal life. Get all you can get now. You're accountable only to the state, whose leaders are accountable to no one.

◆ There is no transgression

against God, only against the state. This secular religion proved false.

The proletariat was captured by a dictatorship of communist leaders. Left with no basis for morals and ethics, communist leaders manufactured new guidelines, rewording the Ten Commandments.

They told their people to be kind and good, and inform on their brothers, sisters, parents, and friends for the good of the proletariat. Over time, people lost any hope for God's justice and eternal life.

This century's unfolding history has revealed the experiment of political and economic communism is a failure. Communism did not produce good will or prosperity.

Man's highest nature, at its best, was still depraved and murderous — sinful. The fall of communism in East Europe came partially because the gap in economic progress between the East and West was becoming obvious to the East.

Still, the religious dimensions of communism persist. Where communism was once a political system of applied socialism, it now has become a religious system of atheistic materialism.

The good news is that Jesus died for the communist and the atheist. His followers should look at them not as enemies, but as a mission field.

A Southern Baptist worker in Asia reminds Christians, "We have a gospel of love and light to share with those who have been deluded, blinded and stripped of their spiritual sensitivity."

"Before God, we cannot write off the communist countries and people, but must include them in our circle of sharing."

"They too must hear the gospel, and in hearing many, too, may come to believe."

Atheistic socialists

When communism and socialism have lost or softened their grip, all too often the religion that has filled the void is atheistic materialism. A look at basic beliefs and practices that arise from communism and socialism gives us insight into how to pray.

	Evangelical Christians	Atheistic socialists	How to pray
Elements of faith	One God, revealed and experienced as the Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Spirit.	Commonly held wealth supplies the needs of the people. But true communism can't be achieved, so the state or the one who leads it is supreme and always will be.	Pray they will hear that history is "His Story" and will see that Jesus can cleanse a struggling conscience and free them from fate and the futility of their existence.
Key figure in history	Jesus Christ	Karl Marx	Pray they will be open to examine the truth of the resurrection of Jesus, the power of God in the lives of Christians and the resulting joy in adversity and fearlessness in death.
Teachings on Christ	<p>Who person: One divine, eternal person. Two natures: divine and human.</p> <p>His words: Supreme example of God's love for humans and His intended pattern of living. Jesus is God, reconciling the world to Himself.</p>	Jesus Christ taught a religious doctrine. Religion is "the opium of the people," and faith in anything other than the common good of men keeps people blinded and oppressed; it must be overcome, even if by force.	Pray they will be open to examine the truth of the resurrection of Jesus, the power of God in the lives of Christians and the resulting joy in adversity and fearlessness in death.
Holy Spirit	Eternal member of Trinity. Guide for churches, Christians.	There is no God, and therefore no spirit or spiritual dimension.	Pray that the Holy Spirit will move mightily as communist leaders and people face life's greatest uncertainties: "fate," sin and death.
Holy writings	Bible (Old and New Testaments). Authoritative, unique, inspired Word of God. Norm of faith and practice.	Early written works on the transformation from capitalism to socialism and finally to the most utopian stage, communism. Writings on evolution and humanism.	Pray that socialists will receive the Bible in their own language and be open to its message.
Doctrine of Humanity	Created in God's image. Since Adam's fall, sin is inherent. All relationships damaged beyond human ability to repair.	Secular humanism. Human beings left to control their own destinies without imaginary religious standards will rise to new levels of cooperation and prosperity.	Pray that socialists will recognize humans don't control their own destiny. Pray that Christians will be there in the midst of events man can't control to share the gospel of our caring and power.
Doctrine of Sin	Willful rebellion against God.	Treason against the state and against the people. Sin is against humanity, not God.	Pray that the Holy Spirit will bring deep, gnawing, unforgettable conviction of sin and the persecution of Christians. Pray that persecutors will not be able to sleep.
Doctrine of Salvation	God's gift through Jesus Christ's atonement. Received by grace through personal faith in Christ.	There is no salvation nor need of it. Life is only in material terms and that through the state.	Pray that socialists will thirst for something deeper than the material, that they will thirst to know God.
Meeting Site	Church	Educational facilities for children and re-education facilities for adults. Weekly cell meetings in neighborhoods for propaganda purposes. Certain leaders of the doctrine are revered through such representations as statues and	Pray that additional worship places will be opened, that cell groups will multiply, that the underground churches in socialist lands will be protected.
Life after death	Eternal communion with God (Heaven). Eternal separation from God (Hell).	Everything that exists can be seen. Since there is no life after death, raw and present force will have no eternal consequence.	Pray that socialists will wonder about life after death and seek Christians and Christian materials for answers.

Published without Beliefs of Other Groups, North American Mission Board, Alpharetta, Ga.

Baptist schools win both NAIA championships

JACKSON, Tenn. (BP) — This year's NAIA Division I national championship tournaments saw several firsts.

For the first time ever, Union University's Lady Bulldogs won the national championship. The men's basketball team of Georgetown College claimed its first national championship.

Thus, for the first time, Southern Baptist schools won both NAIA Division I national championships.

Union University, the tournament's No. 1-seeded team, toppled four-time defending national champion Southern Nazarene University, 73-70, to win the championship.

The Georgetown College men's team, meanwhile, won the NAIA Division I Basketball National Championship.

Georgetown came from behind to beat Southern Nazarene 83-69.

The fourth-seeded Tigers came back from a 13-point deficit to defeat the No. 14-seeded Redskins.

The Tigers broke a tie midway through the second half and Southern Nazarene never caught up.

The tournament's most valuable player, Will Carlton, led Georgetown to its victory.

"Southern Baptists can be proud of the outstanding cali-

bre of athletics to be found on their campuses like Georgetown and Union," Union

President David S. Dockery said. "They can be even more proud of the commitment to

Christian faith and values and academic excellence on which we build."

Bibliocipher

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MKR ZYPKP JFAAYL RBYH
KURD BWH, FUL PFWL,
PKOOYQ AWRRAY
JBWALQYU RD JDHY
KURD HY, FUL ODQMWL
RBYH UDR: ODQ DO
PKJB WP RBY IWUCLDH
DO CDL.

AKIY YWCBRYU:

PWSRYU

Clue: I = K

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Acts Four Twelve.

Celebrating Bangalore's 25th anniversary



John Wikman (right), the former Southern Baptist missionary doctor to India who established Bangalore Baptist Hospital in 1973, returned in January to help the hospital celebrate its 25th anniversary and found himself back in the operating room. Wikman helped staff surgeon Fred Job (center) and surgical nurse Mini Joshua operate when other responsibilities kept medical supervisor Rebekah Naylor away. The 150-bed hospital provides a wide range of medical services, a nursing school and a community health program. The Silver Jubilee celebration included the dedication of new housing for male students and staff and a program of health services offered to the community at greatly reduced prices. (BP photo by Warren Johnson)